

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 NSC-05  
TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00  
FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01  
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-----030658 116166 /12

R 021746Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1152  
INFO AMCONSUL EDINBURGH  
AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. L1652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, PDEV. UK  
SUBJECT: DEVOLUTION: SNP TO PUT FORWARD DEVOLUTION  
BILL

REF: LONDON 3381

1. THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY (SNP) HELD AN  
"EMERGENCY SUMMIT" MEETING IN EDINBURGH MARCH 1 TO  
DISCUSS FUTURE STRATEGY. THE PRINCIPAL DECISION TO  
EMERGE WAS A PROMISE TO INTRODUCE A SHORT, SIMPLE  
BIL/ TO ESTABLISH AN ELECTED ASSEMBLY IN SCOTLAND. AC-  
CORDING TO THE PRESS, THE ENVISAGED BILL WOULD NOT AD-  
DRESS THE QUESTION OF THE ASSEMBLY'S RELATIONSHIP TO  
PARLIAMENT OR THE POWERS TO BE DEVOLVED. THE PROPOSED  
BODY WOULD FUNCTION AS A KIND OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY  
EMPOWERED TO WORK OUT THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS  
AND "NEGOTIATE" WITH HMG. ACCORDING TO AN SNP PRESS  
RELEASE, THE BILL WOULD "VEST IN THE PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND  
THE POWER, THROUGH THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, TO  
DETERMINE THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DETAILED FUNCTIONS  
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OF THE NEW BODY."

2. AT A SUBSEQUENT PRESS CONFERENCE, PARTY CHAIRMAN  
WILLIAM WOLFE SAID THE TEXT OF THE BILL WILL BE PRODUCED  
WITHIN A FEW DAYS AND THE BILL ITSELF WILL BE INTRO-  
DUCED IN THE INTER-PARTY TALKS INITIATED BY THE GOVERN-  
MENT (REFTEL). WOLFE ALSO DENIED THAT THE INTENT OF

THE PROPOSED BILL WAS TO HAVE THE ASSEMBLY DETERMINE SCOTLAND'S FUTURE UNILATERALLY. SNP PARLIAMENTARY LEADER DONALD STEWART, WHEN ASKED WHETHER ELECTION OF AN SNP MAJORITY TO THE PROPOSED ASSEMBLY WOULD BE REGARDED AS A MANDATE TO NEGOTIATE INDEPENDENCE, DECLINED TO ANSWER SUCH A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION.

3. COMMENT: THE SNP NO DOUBT REALIZES THAT SUCH A BILL HAS LITTLE CHANCE OF BEING INTRODUCED IN PARLIAMENT AND NO CHANCE AT ALL OF BEING PASSED. IT IS, ACCORDINGLY, A STRATEGY FROM WHICH THE SNP WILL SEEK A POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. THE MOST NOTABLE ASPECT OF THE SUMMIT MEETING, HOWEVER, WAS ITS RELATIVELY MODERATE TONE. GONE WERE THE BELLIGERENCE AND BRAVADO THAT CHARACTERIZED THE STATEMENTS OF SNP SPOKESMEN FOLLOWING THE DEFEAT OF THE TIMETABLE MOTION. IN LIEU THEREOF, THE SNP APPEARS TO HAVE ADOPTED A MORE REALISTIC AND CALCULATING POSTURE WHICH, FOR THE MOMENT, WOULD APPEAR TO SERVE ITS INTERESTS BETTER. IT ALSO SUGGESTS THAT THE SNP MAY NOT BE AS ENTHUSIASTIC TO TURN OUT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT AS ITS EARLIER STATEMENTS INDICATED.

ARMSTRONG

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**TAGS:** PINT, PDEV, UK  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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